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CL-442 SATELLITE

U.S. devising a sky spy to keep an eye on Soviet

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Washington (News Bureau) — The United States is developing a highly sophisticated spy satellite that will fully replace the capability to monitor Soviet missile developments which was lost when Iran's new revolutionary government closed down American intelligence bases there, it was learned yesterday.

Carter administration sources, disclosing that work on the new stationary reconnaissance satellite is under way, told the Daily News that it will not be completed and deployed before 1983 or 1984. But they insisted that the shortfall in U.S. ability to keep an eye on Soviet nuclear missile testing without the spy posts in Iran would not hamper verification of the existing strategic arms limitation treaty or the new one nearing completion (SALT-2).

Monitoring functions with U-2s

The sources said the important SALT monitoring functions which the U.S. had carried out from the secret listening posts in Iran, just across the border from the major Soviet missile test facility, could be carried out adequately by means of high-flying U-2 spy plane flights near the Soviet border.

But they indicated that as U.S. and Soviet negotiators work to wrap up the final details of SALT-2, the Americans would welcome private assurances from the Russians that they would not condemn U-2 flights over neighboring countries such as Iran and Iraq as hostile acts against the Soviet Union.

Pact may be signed in May

Such assurances would make it easier for the Carter administration to argue, in the face of widespread congressional doubts about the new treaty's verifiability, that the U.S. will be able to monitor Soviet compliance even without the bases in Iran.

Resolving these doubts about veri-

fication could be the key to winning the necessary two-thirds Senate vote to ratify ALT-2. The treaty reportedly may be signed next month and submitted to the Senate in June.

Recent public and private comments by top U.S. officials, including Defense Secretary Harold Brown and CIA Director Stansfield Turner, appeared to hold the door open for the administration to argue that the signing should be delayed until the intelligence capability lost in Iran had been fully replaced. But sources insisted yesterday that this was not the case.

The sources said the administration still believes, as Brown said in a New York speech last week, that this intelligence must be replaced. They said this would be done when the new spy satellite becomes operational four or five years from now.

But they emphasized that these capabilities relate not to verifying SALT, which deals mostly with limitations on numbers and types of missiles, but to other Soviet developments such as launch techniques and missile speed. Although these developments are not covered by SALT, the sources said, in some cases they are of even greater interest to American military planners.

"On a timely basis"

State Department spokesman Thomas Reston, meanwhile, repeated administration pledges that the U.S. will not sign an arms treaty "which is not adequately verifiable." Reston said the administration was confident that the means to insure adequate verification would be found "on a timely basis."

He said the U.S. would be faced with the need to monitor Soviet strategic missile programs even without the new treaty but that this task would be more difficult in the absence of SALT provisions such as the ban on deliberate concealment or other interference with intelligence systems needed to monitor compliance with the pact.